

Good News Daily

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Sunday, August 27

Galatians 3:23—4:7 *As you are sons and daughters, God has sent into our hearts the Spirit of his Son, crying “Abba, Father.”* (v.6 NJB)

Recently, I was having lunch in my favorite diner. In the booth behind me were two couples. I could clearly hear their conversation, which was a debate about God. One couple were Christians, the other were vocally not. What fascinated me about their conversation was that both couples viewed God as judgmental and punishing.

I’ve heard enough sermons about the above verse from Galatians to know that *Abba* is an Aramaic word many biblical scholars describe as a term of endearment for your father (like Dad, Papa, or Daddy).

God sending the Holy Spirit into our hearts, teaching us to call God, Papa or Daddy, is a very different understanding from that of viewing God as judgmental and punishing. It means that the Creator and origin of all that has, does, and will exist, wants to live in a such a deeply intimate, loving, understanding, and personal relationship with each of us, that it would be natural for us to call that Creator God “*Papa.*”

That’s a God anyone would rejoice to come home to!

2 Samuel 24:1-2, 10-25; Psalms 146, 147; John 8:12-20

ANGLICAN CYCLE: PRAY for Ruvuma - (Tanzania) The Rt Revd Maternus Kapinga

DIOCESAN CYCLE: We pray for all priests and lay people in the Diocese of Peru, Springfield and Tabora who labor in love unceasingly for the glory of our Lord, the King of Kings; Birthday of Mark Dirksen, husband of The Very Rev. Beth H. Maynard, Champaign; Wedding anniversary of The Rt. Rev. Daniel H. and Brenda Martins of Springfield.

ST MATTHEW’S: Birthday of Loren Dyson.

Monday, August 28

Acts 26:1-23 *“As for me, I once thought it was my duty to use every means to oppose the name of Jesus the Nazarene.”* (v.9)

When I served in Vietnam, I was part of a Marine unit whose mission was to identify and neutralize Viet Cong leaders. Paul was doing the same kind of thing to Christians in first-century Palestine. As he describes his spiritual journey in his letters, I can see similar themes in my own faith journey. Reading about him was

my first inkling that God could and would help me find a transformative path to follow in dealing with my wartime experiences.

Paul's journey in Christ begins with Christ revealing Paul's spiritual blindness by making him physically blind. He then opens Paul's eyes to see a new path and a new destiny. I believe that those who reject or oppose Jesus Christ are not enemies, or eternally condemned sinners. I believe they are people who are afflicted with spiritual blindness. What they need is for a Christian to gently open their eyes to restore their spiritual sight. The greatest saints often began as great opponents of Jesus Christ!

1 Kings 1:5-31; Psalms 1, 2, 3; Mark 13:14-27

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Ruwenzori - (Uganda) The Rt Revd Reuben Kisembo;
South Ruwenzori - (Uganda) The Rt Revd Jackson Nzerebende

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of the Rev. Gerald W. Raschke, Springfield;
Wedding anniversary of The Rev. Donald H. and Rikke Langlois, Chandler, AZ.

ST MATTHEW'S: Birthday of Charlotte Casperson and Janet Hoffman, and the
Wedding Anniversary of Sandy and Bob Kohlase.

Tuesday, August 29

Acts 26:24—27:8 He had reached this point in his defense when Festus shouted out, "Paul, you are out of your mind; all that learning of yours is driving you mad." (v.24)

Part of my life involves working with highly educated and very secular professionals. As we socialize together, they often raise the matter of my Christian faith. During these discussions, I'm often told that I'm foolish or naive to believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

For a few years, I did my best to make intellectual arguments supporting my faith in these conversations. Then I realized that was never going to work. Instead, when these discussions arise, I share my personal experiences of the transforming love and healing power of God, through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. That changes the conversation. It actually leads to questions about my experiences and what I believe about their meaning.

My take-away from these discussions is to remember that God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not ideas. They are realities! The best way to talk about a reality is to share our personal, relational experience of that reality, not have an abstract conversation about ideas. Our best course is always to witness, not argue!

1 Kings 1:38—2:4; Psalms 5, 6; Mark 13:28-37

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Sabah - (South East Asia) The Rt Revd Melter Jiki Tais; The Rt Revd John Yeo, Assistant Bishop

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Wedding anniversary of The Rev. Dr. Arnold and Sharon Hoffman, Glen Carbon.

Wednesday, August 30

Mark 14:1-11 *“Ointment like this could have been sold for over three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor”*; and they were angry with her. (v.5)

My congregation has recently been involved in a kerfuffle about money. (Specifically, there isn't enough to meet the budget!) One group of members thinks that we should fire the organist to reduce the budget. As with the speakers in the above verse, these folks talk about the good outreach works we could do with the money we'd save.

There are two ideas that aren't being considered here. The first is that music has been an important congregational offering to God for decades. (Believing that it truly is an offering is a spiritually important part of the community's identity.) Second, the real congregational issue is and has been about stewardship—individual monetary generosity and commitment.

I think we need to gather our hearts and heads together to remind ourselves that not everything in parish life is about money or outreach. Sometimes it is simply about loving Christ and giving God glory in joy and expressive generosity!

1 Kings 3:1-15; Psalm 119:1-24; Acts 27:9-26

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Sabongidda-Ora - (Bendel, Nigeria) The Rt Revd John Akao

DIOCESAN CYCLE: The Rev. James Muriuki, Cape Girardeau, MO., Ordination to the Priesthood; Wedding anniversary of The Rev. Dr. Gregory A. and Nada Tournoux, Springfield.

Thursday, August 31

Mark 14:12-26 *And while they were at table eating, Jesus said, “In truth I tell you, one of you is about to betray me, one of you eating with me.”*. (v.18)

Sooner or later in life, someone you care about deeply, and believe to be your friend, will betray you. When this has happened to me, I confess that my response has usually been several days of free-floating anger. Unfortunately, that always leads to depression, and often some sort of illness.

Recently, it happened again. I was lucky. When I learned of the betrayal, I was with a wise Christian friend. He said, “Before you do anything else, pray that God will hold your betrayer in a loving embrace. Next, ask God to give you compassionate grief, grieving the loss you're experiencing, but with compassion, rather than rage. The compassion helps you to come to understanding why this betrayal happened. In time, that understanding can lead to forgiveness, which can lead to the possibility of reconciliation.”

It was good advice. I've worked to follow it. The result has been understanding and compassion, not the enmity and unresolved wounding of past experiences. I pray that understanding and compassion will, with God's help, eventually lead to real forgiveness and reconciliation.

1 Kings 3:16-28; Psalm 18:1-20; Acts 27:27-44

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Saldanha Bay - (Southern Africa) The Rt Revd Raphael Hess

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Lord, keep us in your power.

Friday, September 1

Mark 14:27-42 *And Jesus said to him [Peter], "In truth I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will have disowned me three times."* (v.30)

Reading this verse for the first time as a teenager, I thought to myself, "I would never disown Jesus." Now in my latter years, and looking back, I realize that I've disowned him often.

I disown him when I'm in a group ridiculing Christians and don't speak up about my faith. I disown him when I skip worship on Sunday to attend a social function or sporting event. I disown him when I see someone in need and cross the street to avoid making contact. These examples all have something in common. They're all things that I do to protect myself from having my faith make me uncomfortable.

After the Resurrection, Jesus didn't berate Peter, or publicly shame him. Instead, he asked Peter three times, "Do you love me?" In doing that, the triple disowning was washed away by the love in Peter's heart.

My prayer for all of us is that our love for Jesus Christ will always be stronger than the discomfort bearing witness to him might bring.

1 Kings 5:1—6:1, 7; Psalms 16, 17; Acts 28:1-16

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Salisbury - (Canterbury, England) The Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam; Salisbury - Ramsbury - The Rt Revd Edward Condry; Salisbury - Sherborne - The Rt Revd Karen Gorham

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of Jacque, wife of The Rev. Canon William H. Moore, Jr. Wallace, NC.

ST MATTHEW'S: Birthday of Bill Johns.

Saturday, September 2

Mark 14:43-52 *So when the traitor came, he went up to Jesus at once and said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him.* (v.45)

Almost every Good Friday, I try to imagine what it felt like to Jesus to have Judas kiss him. That kiss transformed an act of loving intimacy into an act of murderous betrayal. Jesus' response to this horrid kiss in Matthew is, "My friend, do what you are here for." Jesus calls Judas, "My friend." How can that be? At that moment, how can Judas be Jesus' *friend*?

I believe that Jesus can say what he does, because he knows that what will happen to him in the next 72 hours will fulfill God's plan for the salvation of all humanity (including Judas) forever. God will transform a murderous betrayal into the eternal victory of love.

Therein lies one of the great mysteries and truths of our faith. No matter how horrid, terrifying, and victimizing any human action appears to be, God's eternal victory of love will ultimately redeem and transform it into new and everlasting life.

1 Kings 7:51—8:21; Psalms 20, 21; Acts 28:17-31

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Sambalpur - (North India) The Rt Revd Pinuel Dip

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Way, the Truth and the Life.

by John Fergusson

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For the St. Matthew's Community, please remember the following in your prayers this week:

Pray for the sick and those in distress: Linda S., Reva, Jeff B., Jim T., Melissa B., Megan R., Carol K., Amanda D., Drew Q., Wendy R., Eric, Stephanie, Janet H., DiAnne W., Carlos L., Charlie, Tim H. and family, Greg P., Linda S., Phyllis P.

Pray for the Faithful Departed:

Pray for those living in nursing homes and other shut-ins: Dale B., Alicia P., Barb W., Daniel T.

Pray for: The Diocese of Tabora, Anglican Church of Tanzania, The Rt. Rev. Elias Chakupewa, the clergy and people. The Missionary Diocese of Peru, The Rt. Rev. Alejandro Mesco. Fr. Kari Marcelle, the clergy and people of Holy Trinity St. Vincent. Fr. Dave and all clergy, for whom we light the candle on the west side of the Altar.